

A
SERMON

Preached July 26. 1685.

Being the DAY of
Publick Thanksgiving

Appointed by His MAJESTY for the
Late VICTORY over the

R E B E L S.

In the Parish-Churches of
St. Mildred's Poultrey, and St. Ann's Aldersgate.

Published in Vindication of That, and the Author.

By JOHN WILLIAMS, Rector of
St. MILDRED's POULTREY.

L O N D O N:

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in *Amen Corner.* 1685.

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*To the Right Honourable and Right
Reverend Father in God, HENRY
Lord Bishop of London.*

MY LORD,

IT is to Your Lordship, that we of the Clergy within your Diocese, are immediately (under his Majesty) accountable for our Doctrine and Behaviour ; in which, if any of us are known to offend, it becomes such as know it, and are aggrieved, to complain to you, as our Ordinary, for the Reformation and redressing of it. But it is of late grown too much a practice amongst some, that would be thought not a little concerned for our Church, to be the first that censure us, and without Examination of the Case, or enquiring into the Truth and Certainty of what they report, make the wide World the Judg, and proclaim our Faults, whatever they are, or are said to be, in the chief Places of Concourse ; and which your Lord-

ship (and perhaps the Party himself)
knows nothing of, till every body knows
it, and common Fame brings it to your
Ears.

My Lord, it has happened thus with me,
as with others (who am not the first, nor
it's likely shall be the last that is to be thus
served.) For having Preached *July 26.*
the Day appointed by his Majesty for a
Publick Thanksgiving for the late Victory
over the Rebels, there want not some who
have reported that I only entertained my
Auditory with a General Discourse that
was not to the purpose of the Day and
Occasion. A Calumny I for a while slighted,
and contented my self to give my
Friend satisfaction, that first acquainted me
with it : But when, from a deep Design in
some to asperse the Clergy of the City,
from a Credulity in others to believe ill
of them, and from the humour of an Age
(from what reason it proceeds, God knows)
given to believe a Lye, it came to be a
publick Talk : It became me, if I had no
regard to my own Reputation, yet from
the regard I ought to have to our Clergy
(which

(which too much suffers by such aspersions) and to your Lordship (under whose Cognizance it falls) to take the most effectual course for the refuting of it, by publishing my Sermon, how defective soever it may otherwise be. This therefore I do, without adding any new matter, saving what may serve to render it the more intelligible, useful, and entire (which is therefore distinguished from the other, and set forth by marks) and without making any Alteration, so much as in the Words relating to the Day, forbearing even those Things that I said more of it, as they then offered themselves to my thoughts, because I cannot now exactly recollect it, though I am sensible it would have been not a little to the Advantage of it.

I must acknowledg, there is not that bitterness and severity, with which some eager spirits are gratified ; having learned from the behaviour of St. Michael, not to bring even against an Adversary a railing accusation : But if I mistake not, the Doctrine I teach, doth overthrow the main Principle by which Rebellion is supported ; a way indeed

indeed that may not make so much noise,
but if prudently and effectually managed,
strikes it to the Heart ; and differs as much
from the former, as fighting and vanquishing
an Enemy doth from railing at him.
And therefore, tho I am not able to answer
for the order and dress of it (which had the
Printing been a mere voluntary act of
mine, I should be obliged to) yet for the
Truth and Loyalty, I may safely challenge
those that have adventured either spight-
fully or ignorantly to revile it, the worl^t of
mine or our Churches Adversaries, to que-
stion it. In Confidence of which, I do pre-
sent it to your Lordship, and desire to stand
or fall, as your Lordship shall judg of it :
Who as in this, so upon all other occasions,
shall approve my self,

Your Lordships

Most Obedient Servant,

JOHN WILLIAMS.

To the Parishioners of St. Mildred's
Poultrey, and St. Mary Cole ; and
of St. Ann's Aldersgate, and St.
John Zachary.

HAVING Preached the ensuing
Sermon to both Auditories the
same day, I now present it to you
from the Press ; not of mine own
accord (for then it had been better fitted for
that purpose) but as compelled thereunto
for my own (not to say your) vindication.
I have already appealed to my Superiors as
my Judg ; to you I appeal as my Witnesses : To
them, Whether the Matter be either true in it
self, or fitted to the Occasion : To you, Whether
it be the Sermon I Preached. I cannot
expect, that even the most attentive should
remember every Particular then delivered ;
but I am confident, that you will be able ge-
nerally to say, that this was the Sermon I at
that time entertained you with. And if this be
so (as so it is) then I need say no more, to
answer

answer those that have too rashly censured and traduced it as not at all suitable to the occasion it was Preached upon. Certainly if the Doctrine therein contained be true, viz. that We must not do Evil that Good may come; those that first invented, and so industriously spread the Calumny, are not the best of men (whatever end they think to serve by it) nor a credit to that Religion and Church they profess to be of. I leave such to the Sermon; and recommend that, you, and my Labours amongst you, to the Blessing of Almighty God, beseeching him to lead us into all Truth.

Your Servant in Christ Jesus,

JOHN WILLIAMS.

The Reader is to take Notice, That so much of the Sermon as is thus marked " was, through want of Time, not Preached, or else not so fully as it is now Printed.

A

A
S E R M O N

Preached July 26.

Being the Day set apart for a Publick
THANKSGIVING for the
 Late **VICTORY** over the
REBELS.

R O M. III. 7, 8. -

If the Truth of God hath more abounded through my lye unto his Glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil that good may come, whose damnation is just?



N the Former Chapters of this Epistle, the Apostle had considered the sad Condition which the whole Mass of Mankind was in, whether Jews or Gentiles; and shewed that the Jews, whatever Preheminence they had of the *Gentiles*, as

God's peculiar People, and invested with many Eminent Priviledges and Marks of the Divine Favour ; yet in case of Unbelief and Disobedience, they could not be thereby secured against *the Wrath of God which is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness* [ch. 1. 18.] *For there is no respect of persons with God* [ch. 2. 28.] From whence he concludes, [ver. 28.] *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh ; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

Against this, the Apostle doth suppose it will probably be objected, *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?* chap. 3. 1. To this he replies, v. 2. *Much every way ; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the Oracles of God ; by which they had the best means in possession, of knowing what the Will of God is, and the best Encouragements in many Excellent Promises for obeying it.*

But if in the mean while, with all these Advantages, they do not believe nor obey, is it reasonable

reasonable to suppose that they should yet stand in the same condition as if they believed and obeyed ? And that God could not withdraw his Favour , and disfranchise them of those Priviledges, without being false to his Word ? *For what if some did not believe ? shall their unbelief make the Faith, or Faithfulness , of God without effect ? God forbid.* v. 3.

Against which the Apostle considers it may be further objected, *But if it happen that our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God,* v. 5. And that by the unbelief of the Jews and their rejection upon it, God doth enlarge his Church, and make the Gentiles Partakers of the same Priviledg, *is God unrighteous that taketh vengeance ?* To this he replies with great Indignation, *God forbid ; for then how shall God judge the world ?* And then what an horrid consequence would follow from it, viz. *Let us do evil that good may come : For, faith he, if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lye unto his Glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner ? And not rather, as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil that good may come ?*

Which Words, and the Coherence, will be better understood, if it be considered, that the

7th verse is but the Repetition of the Objecti-
on made verse 5. And the 8th verse is a con-
tinuation of the objection in verse 7. As will
appear more evidently, 1. If the Word *rather*,
which is not in the Original, be left out. And
2. If the following words, *as we be slanderously
reported, and as some affirm that we say*, be read
by way of Parenthesis. And 3. That the word
[*why*] be repeated after this manner, *If the
truth of God hath more abounded through my lye
unto his Glory; why yet am I also judged as a sin-
ner? And why not (as we be slanderously reported,
and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil
that good may come, whose damnation is just.* So
that the words, *let us do evil that good may come*,
are an Inference from the objection contained
in the Words, *If the truth of God hath more a-
bounded, &c.* And which it seems some mali-
ciously reported, that the Apostle held; and
charged upon him as his Principle and Do-
ctrine: But he protests it is a notorious calum-
ny, and a Doctrine he abhors, and so can be
none of his; that it's a Doctrine of pernici-
ous Consequence, and what no man can hold
without apparent hazard of his Salvation,
whose damnation is just. Which censure, tho' it
immediately refers to the Authors of that flan-
der

der cast upon him, yet hath also a respect to the impiety of the Doctrine he disavows, and the danger such are in that do maintain it. This is at least implied ; for if the Damnation of such as invented the Calumny, and threw it upon him, be just, then no less certainly is it true of such as do hold the Doctrine it self, they calumniated him with.

In Treating upon these Words,

1. I shall consider what evil it is which Persons may pretend to do for the sake of what is Good ; and what Good it is that they may respect in doing Evil. And,

2. I shall shew the unreasonableness and unlawfulness of doing evil that good may come.

3. I shall shew the danger in so doing, from the event of it, *whose damnation is just.*

4. I shall shew the prevalency of this Principle in the Christian World : Of these as the time will permit.

1. What Evil it is that Persons may pretend to do for the sake of some Good, &c.

By Evil, all Sins are to be understood, whether they be a Transgression of the Law of Nature, or of Divine Revelation ; whether they be Sins of Omission, or Commission.

‘ 1. When

1. When I say, Sins against the Law of
 Nature and Revelation are hereby forbid, I
 understand thereby what is intrinsically and
 of its own nature evil, and not what is so up-
 on mutable Reasons, such as that which is
 forbid by Temporary and Arbitrary Laws,
 depending upon the mere will of the Law-
 giver, or some present Reasons. For in this
 case, that which is evil by such circumstance,
 may not only be done when that circum-
 stance ceaseth, but also where there is an ab-
 solute necessity for it, tho the general Reason
 for the observation of that Law continue.
 Thus it was in the case put by our Saviour,
 when the Law forbade the People to eat the
 Shew-Bread, and yet *David* with his Compa-
 ny entred into the house of God when he was
 an hungred, and did eat it, *Marth.* 12. 3, 4. But
 if the Matter forbidden be intrinsically evil,
 the case is otherwise, and no circumstance
 of things can alter it, as it is in violation of
 Oaths, Blaspheming of God, &c.

2. When I say Sins of Omission and Com-
 mission are forbidden to be done for a good
 end, we are to understand, that the Omission
 of a Duty is not concerned in it, when two
 duties do interfere, so that both cannot be
 performed,

performed together, and one must be omitted for the other; for then the more necessary takes place of the less; and the omission of the less, is so far then from being an evil, that it is a Duty. So our Saviour did when he healed on the Sabbath day, *Luke 13.15.* and so he determined the case, when he said, God will have mercy and not sacrifice, *Matth. 12. 7.*

The Good which will not warrant any evil to be done for it, may be of Two Sorts.

1. ~~Negative~~: The preventing, avoiding, or removing any Evil which we fear, foresee, or suffer by. priv

2. Positive : The procuring, promoting, or establishing any Good , whether Publick or Private, whether Civil or Religious.

The thing called Good, and especially that kind of Good which is evidently known and own'd so to be (such as the Cause of God and Religion, the good of the Church, and Salvation of Mankind) is so Excellent, that he that doth most of all employ himself in it, and takes the most effectual course for preserving or obtaining it, is justly to be esteemed one of the best of men : And since this is so eminent and useful a Good, it's hard to think he can err that in any Action or undertaking, has and keeps

keeps this in his Eye, and doth steer his course according as that shall require and need.

And therefore it's both a Temptation to mankind frequently to commit unwarrantable Actions, and engage in unlawful Designs for such an end, and a Temptation to others to think well of it : But now if evil be evil in its nature, and is not to be changed, then evil is not to be done upon any reason whatsoever ; and the goodness of the End, as long as it cannot change the Nature of the Action, cannot make that to be no fault which was so before, and will be so after, and wherever that good End is not. So that whether there be a good End or not, evil is not to be done, since the evil is as well evil where this End is, as where it is not : And I may safely say, it is as lawful to do evil for evil's sake, as to do evil for the sake of what is good.

And this I shall represent from the following Considerations.

1. If Evil may be done that good may come of it, it will in Effect confound all difference betwixt Good and Evil ; since Evil in such Circumstances where it may serve a good End, is as Eligible and fit to be done, as what is

is really good. Now if what is evil in such case, is lawful; then that which is unlawful becomes lawful ; and where is then the difference betwixt Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, lawful and unlawful, betwixt what is commanded, and what is forbidden ? That there is as vast a difference betwixt these two, as between Light and Darknes, all do acknowledg ; and setting aside the good End, evil will be evil, and what is evil will be unlawful to the World's end : But though these are never so contrary in Notion and Speculation, yet if they unite in Practice, and that where good is the End, Evil may be used as a means, there will be as much confusion, as if the difference had not been observed and determined in the Notion : And there being no case in which there may not be some good, real or imaginary, pretended, there will be no case in which Evil will not, or may not be done : And then if Evil may be thus done, and allowably too, and lose its Name, and for the present its Nature ; then what Evil is there which will not be legitimate ? For let but a good End, such as the Glory of God, the Advantage of the Church, be placed in the Van, and presently Injustice and Extortion,

Rapine and Violence, Oppression and Tyranny, Usurpation and Disloyalty, and all the Evils of the World may come in the Rear ; and men need not boggle at whatever such a cause may need or require, when they have this to justifie them. So that by this means, Evil shall be as securely and lawfully practised, as if it had nothing of that Nature in it; and by being in such good Company, comes to lose its malignity, and become venial,say I, nay , praise-worthy and meritorious ; and what without that End was the worst of Villanies, shall by it,become an Heroical Virtue, and Divine Quality.

L 2. It takes away all security and trust amongst men, and puts them into a posture of War. If there be no Essential Difference between Good and Evil, but that all Actions are equally lawful in themselves, then no man is safe, further than the Laws of the Land, the Authority of the Magistrate, or his own Power can make him : And though there be this Difference, yet if it be not observed, but that a good End may throw it down , and make the Evil to be Good, and the unlawful to be lawful, then we are no longer quiet or safe than our neighbour hath no good end of his

his own to serve ; for if that comes into play, of a Friend he may be an Enemy, of a Confident he may be a Deceiver, a Robber, or a Traytor.

And our Security depending upon a great uncertainty, and what a Person doth not now understand, he may in a little Time perceive to be his Interest ; we must be always upon our Guard, and every man is bound, as far as his safety is concerned, to look upon the best of his Friends as in a possibility of being his most dangerous Enemy, and to converse and treat with all mankind with Distrust, Jealousie and Fear. Grant this, that Evil becomes lawful by a good End, and we that live in Amity and good Correspondence, may be in as much Danger as those that live at the Foot of *Aetna* or *Vesuvius*, which in a Moment do shake and tremble, and vomit forth their Flames, and discharge them upon the Neighbourhood, to their utter Ruin and Devastation ; and when we think our selves secure, may have all compacts broken, Oaths dissolved, all difference betwixt Superiours and Inferiors confounded. It exposes the Church and State to every Pretender, and any one that has a mind, will never want a Reason for Insurrection and Rebellion.

bellion. For it's but setting up a good End, and it gives him a Right, as much (if not more) to assault, as the other to defend himself. So that this Principle of doing Evil that Good may come, is as uncomfortable, as it is unsafe; and cannot be true if the Peace and good Order of the World be to be minded and secured, and if it be possible for it so to be.

3. If this Principle be true, it would be a disparagement to the Wisdom and Power of Divine Providence, or argue a Distrust in it. The Providence of God doth govern the World, and as the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind are the Ends it doth respect and prosecute, so it's above all Temptation to use such means for the accomplishing those Ends, as are Dishonourable and Inglorious, Base and Infamous: But if this be allowed, that we may do evil that Good may come, it would represent the Divine Providence as a Friend to such Courses; or that it as much needed our help in order to the attaining those Ends, as an evil Course is supposed necessary for those that would attain it.

But now if the Divine Providence is a displaying the Wisdom and Power, the Justice and Goodness of God, then it neither needs nor

nor uses any such Arts as will debase his Authority, and be a diminution to his Divine Perfections : And consequently, if such are used, it shews a distrust of Divine Providence in those that use them: And so what was unlawful without that good End pretended to be respected, is for that reason unlawful with it. If therefore Persons do pass the Bounds prescribed them by the Divine Law (whatever cause they do it for) it's to betake themselves to diabolical Arts, and to call in the Devil to their Assistance. They do like *Saul*, who went to the Witch when God had forsaken him: Or as *Abaziah*, that in his Sicknes sent to *Baalzebul* the God of *Ekron*, when there was a God in *Israel*, *2 Kings 1. 2, 6.* Such do in effect disown the Presence of God in the World, or the Concernment he hath for the managing of things in it. For *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*, Jam. 1. 20. And his cause doth not need any unjust Arts to defend and support it : And if by all that men can lawfully do, they are not able to maintain or promote it, they are to proceed no farther, but to leave it to the Wisdom and Power of God to contrive and prosecute what may serve for the accomplishing so excellent an end. We are

are always to resign up our Wills and Under-
standings and Devices to him, and to believe
that when we have done all we lawfully can,
he will in his good time, and by ways of his
own, do what we cannot ; and we cannot do
what is unlawful and Evil. As long as we thus
do, and contain our selves within the Bounds
of our Religion, we give a due respect to
Divine Providence ; but if we once venture
to pass them, we must either suspect our cause,
or God's Concernment in it ; and so disparage
our selves, or the Protection we pro-
fess to depend upon. I shall close this with
the Observation of the Son of Syrach, Ecclus.

L 35. 11, 12, 13. *Say not thou it is through the Lord that I turn back [or aside] for thou oughtest not to do the things that he hateth. Say not thou he hath caused me to err ; for he hath no need of the sinful man. The Lord hateth all the abomination of Error, and they that fear God love it not.* Ver. 20. *He hath commanded no man to do ungodly, neither hath he given any man license to sin.*

4. The Principle of doing Evil that Good
may come, doth evacuate and disannull the Au-
thority of God's Commands, as if we were no
further to respect them, than may be for our
own

own private Convenience and Interest, or the Convenience and Interest of the Church or State. For if the Goodness of the End may make the Means to be Good, how wicked and unjust soever they otherwise are ; then the Law of God, which forbids that Evil, is of no Obligation, when that End comes between ; and so what the Law doth condemn, it would allow ; and what it doth forbid, it would set us again loose from ; it would leave it wholly in our own Power, whether we would keep or break it, and to break it would be as much to obey, as to keep it. By this Means, the Commands of God would be contriv'd rather to serve our ends than his, and be made more to provide for our ease and security, than his Honour and Glory. How would this overthrow the Authority, and disparage the Excellency of Gods Law, and render the Threatning of our Saviour insignificant ? Matth. 5. 19. *Whosoever shall break one of the least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in, and be utterly excluded the Kingdom of Heaven.*

5. If this were true, it would change the very Notion and Character of a Good Man, who is described, with Job, to be *an upright man,*

one that fears God, and eschews evil. With David, to be a man after God's own heart, 1 Sam.

13. 14. With Nathaneel, to be an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile, Joh. 1. 47.

Christians are to be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves, Matth. 10. 16. They are to be Free and Ingenuous, Candid and Open, Plain and Sincere ; they are to love, and their Love is to be without dissimulation, Rom. 12. 9.

But to allow the doing evil that Good may come, would be to be wise without Innocency ; to fear God, and not to eschew evil ; to be an Israelite, and yet full of Guile ; that is, to be a Christian, and to be none ; to pretend one thing, and be another.

6. If this Doctrine be true, it would be a great disparagement to Religion, and make that in Conclusion to be a Patron of Vice, which in its Precepts and Directions, it's a declared enemy unto. It was to little purpose that the Heathens had a Religion, and gods, when their gods were supposed to be inclinable to, and enslaved by the same Passions which ruled amongst men : And what Veneration could such Persons give to those kind of Deities, who abhorred those Vices which reigned amongst the Objects of their Adoration. And if

tho our Religion is never so pious in its Institution, yet if by some collateral Ways it permits Men to be impious, it would be as contemptible as the gods among the Heathens. It's the Excellency of the Christian Religion, that by its Precepts and Commands, its Arguments and Motives, its Considerations and Rewards, it doth drive at the Perfection of Humane Nature, and bring men into a propinquity to God, and a Capacity of conversing with him here, and enjoying him hereafter. It purifies the Heart, rectifies the Intentions, governs the Actions of Men. It makes them humble and lowly, gentle and meek, contented and satisfied. It's a Religion contrived for the good of Mankind in every Capacity and State. But if this should be tolerated and maintained by it, That men might do evil for a good end, it would take in again all the Mischief it did discountenance and controul, threaten and condemn; and the World would be filled with the spawn of all manner of wickedness whatsoever, under the profession.

fession of Religion. This would effectually destroy the Honour, and put a stop to the success of it. It would turn the minds of all good and vertuous men against it, and induce them to think it no more worthy of their respect, than *Mahomer's* Paradise would be of their choice; nay, than the Sands and Deserts of *Africa*, where each Creature preys upon its Fellow, as it hath an opportunity for it.

And therefore from these and the like Reasons, it is no wonder that the Apostle did with Indignation cast off the Aspersion charged upon him by the false Apostles, that he declared against it with all his might, and doom'd it to the Pit of Hell: And which again we find him defying, Rom. 6. 1, 2. *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.*

‘ Which Leads us to the next General.

‘ III. This Principle of doing evil that good may come, is not only thus evil in its Nature, and mischievous in the direful

' direful Consequences of it in this World ;
 ' but is also as pernicious to the souls
 ' of Men in the other. For , saith the
 ' Apostle , their *damnation is just* : that
 ' is, those that hold it, and act according
 ' to it, are in such a dangerous condition,
 ' that nothing less than a full, sincere, and
 ' speedy Repentance , can prevent their
 ' final and Eternal Destruction : it being
 ' not only the Will of God so resolving,
 ' and the Word of God so declaring, that
 ' *damnation* belongs to them ; but there is
 ' the reason of the Thing for it, implied in
 ' the Phrase, *whose damnation is just*. For
 ' if we reflect upon the Principle (to sum
 ' up what I have said) it leads to such ma-
 ' nifold and desperate mischiefs; doth so
 ' evidently tend to , and most commonly
 ' conclude in the overthrow of all good
 ' Order and Government, Peace and Unity
 ' in the World ; doth so much derogate
 ' from the Honour of Gods Providence,
 ' and his Religion ; doth so much pervert
 ' the Tempers of men, that it must needs
 ' be very hateful to him, who is a God of
 ' Truth, Equity, and Order; and so can no

more like, than he can need such Conclusions and Practices. And consequently, the Persons holding such Principles, and engaging in Practices issuing from, and conformable to them, must also be the Objects of his heavy Displeasure.

But it may be said, Where is this Principle to be met with, and where are the Persons that do hold and defend this Principle?

This is to be resolved in the last General. Which is,

IV. To shew the Prevalency of this in the Christian World. And here I could wish I had nothing further to say, but that as no Religion has more discountenanced such Principles and Proceedings than the Christian, so no Nations nor Persons had more discountenanced the thing than those that have professed it ; but it is too notorious to be dissembled : For that there have been Rebellions against, and Depositions of Princes, Dissolutions of Governments ; taking and breaking of Oaths; and other things apparently evil, of

'of that and the like kind done, to serve a
 'Cause, a Party, or a Church, is no Mystery
 'now-a-days : And if any one lacks to be
 'inform'd, I had rather, at the present, he
 'should receive it from the Publick Re-
 'cords, in which those things are deposited,
 'than from me. All I pray is, That at length
 'the Christian World may understand
 'their Religion better, and their secular
 'Interest less ; or that they would see it to
 'be their best and truest Interest to be gui-
 'ded by their Religion ; which teaches the
 'wholsome Doctrine of being subject to
 'the *higher powers*, and that *they that resist*
 '*shall receive to themselves damnation*, Rom.
 '13. 2. And as in the Text, That we must
 'not do evil that good may come.

And according to this Principle of
 the Apostle (that it was unlawful and
 damnable to do evil that good may
 come) did our Saviour Christ, and the
 Christians of the Primitive Church pro-
 ceed. None ever had a Power greater
 than our Saviour to confound and destroy
 his Enemies, nor a better end to serve, and
 which he died to accomplish; and yet he did
 not

not use that power when urged by the Apostles to command Fire from Heaven to consume those that would not receive him ; but rebuked them, and said, *Ye know not what spirit ye are of,* Luk. 9. 54, 55. And the Primitive Christians, though so desirous of professing and propagating their Religion, that they cheerfully laid down their Lives to bear witness to it, and that the World might see they *followed not cunningly devised Fables* ; yet never made use of any Secular Power to defend it or themselves (when not without it) ; but, like Moses, endured all things, *as seeing him who is invisible* ; and that knew when God thought fit, and the fulness of his time was come, that Truth should over-power all manner of opposition whatsoever.

And in Conformity to this, are the *Confessions of Faith* in all the Protestant and Reformed Churches, from which there can nothing be drawn, that will justifie Opposition or Rebellion against Civil Authority; but they expressly declare against it. And if any particular Persons amongst them, (as there are) have defended it , we know from

from whence they fetched their Artillery, I mean their Arguments, and whither they went to sharpen their Weapons.

And I may say, That generally speaking, they have acted according to those Principles of Submission in all lawful Things to Superiours, and of making no hostile opposition to them.

So it was in our Nation, when Queen *Mary* was a known Member of the *Roman* Church, yet the Protestants first joined with her against the Lady *Jane Grey*, who was invested with the Title of Queen, and was a Protestant.

And in *France*, the Protestants joined with *Henry the 3d*, of another Religion, and supported him against the League of those that were of his own Perswasion.

And this particularly is the avowed Doctrine of the Church of *England*, in all its Articles and Homilies at large, Three * of which are against Rebellion.

From all which, we may understand what Enemies they are to our Religion, as well as the Publick Peace, that do proceed upon the Principle of doing evil that good

* It should
be six, or six
parts of the
Homily.

good may come ; and that so they set up Religion , care not what they do , nor what disparagement they bring upon that , as well as Injury to the Publick .

And what to think of those that were animated to the late Rebellion amongst us (so happily quelled) by this pretence .

It is evident , I think , that the chief of them had other Things in their Eye , and that it was not so much Religion , as Ambition , or Revenge , or the avoiding punishment for other Crimes , &c . that instigated them hereunto . But if we allow the Reason to be true , and not fictitious , yet it is not good nor sufficient , as I have shewed .

And we have therefore Reason to bless God , that he hath prevented , as well the propagating this principle (by their success) as the Blood-shed and Confusion that would have ensued ; and the Rebellion and Contention that would otherwise have prevailed with it , if not been entailed upon these Nations .

We

We have indeed deserved that God should thus punish us, whom Plague and Fire, and other Judgments, have left, for the most part, unreformed.

And therefore so much the greater Reason have we for the Blessing of God that he has yet had Mercy for us, and that he has rather taken up the Rod to affright us, than to destroy us ; that we may yet sit under our own Vines and Fig-Trees , and enjoy our selves, and the Fruit of our honest Labours and Industry ; and what is more, the Gospel, in Peace.

The Lord grant that we be truly sensible of his undeserved Favours, and may shew our Thankfulness, by our Loyalty to our Prince, Stedfastness to our Religion, and the Holiness of our Lives; that by our Submission to Authority, the Peaceableness and Piety of our Conversations, we may bring Honour to God and our Religion.

(26)

If we thus do good, we are sure that Good will come of it; for the fruit of Righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

FINIS.

